

Twelfth Night Paper

Background:

Like other Elizabethan playwrights, Shakespeare seldom used original plots for his dramas-- instead using existing material and adapting it toward his own ends. *Twelfth Night* is no different, based on two sources: the Italian play *Gl'ingannati* and a re-working of some of this material in Barnabe Riche's "Of Apolonius and Silla." This essay will focus on the second of these.

Though there are clear plot affinities between "Of Apolonius and Silla" and *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare introduced new characters, altered some details in the plot, and changed the characterization of many of the characters and how they relate to others.

The Assignment:

Write an essay in which you focus on one or more alteration that Shakespeare made in a character or the nature of a character's relationship that would account for a thematic difference between Shakespeare and his source material. As a starting point, this means identifying what Riche is trying to communicate in his story (a theme) and what Shakespeare is trying to communicate in his play (either a different argument altogether or essentially the same argument with notable difference).

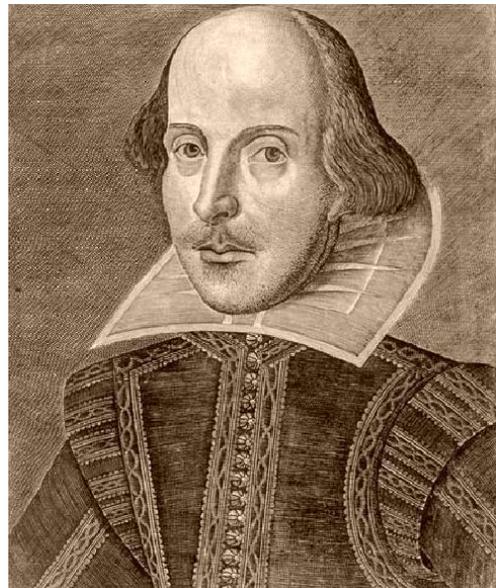
The most productive place to focus is either on the Viola/Silla and Orsino/Apolonius relationship OR the Viola/Silla and Sebastian/Silvio relationship to Olivia/Juliana OR an analysis of one of these characters in isolation (investigating the contrasting way the two authors characterize them).

Do **not** attempt to do more than one task (narrow your approach). Do **not** merely list differences between the two works. Do **not** write a critique about which work is "better."

Most especially, do **not** forget that this is a two-part prompt; you **must** focus on differences that develop a unique theme in Shakespeare or a theme that Shakespeare develops differently (though this could mean a difference in emphasis).

Requirements:

- You must utilize quotation from both selections
- You must focus more on Shakespeare than Riche
- Your essay will be multi-paragraph and be no less than 850 words (this is just a minimum baseline, not an aspiration)



William Shakespeare
1564-1616

Resources:

- *Twelfth Night*
- "Of Apolonius and Silla" on pages 110-130 of the Signet Classics edition of the play
- If you are using an edition other than Signet Classics, an electronic version of "Of Apolonius and Silla" available for you to download from my web-site.